

LETTERS

RELIGIOUS

AND

MORAL.

By CLEMENTINA.

L O N D O N:

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P R E F A C E.

TO the Candour and Indulgence of
the Public, the following Letters are re-
spectfully submitted,

By their sincere Friend,

And obedient,

Humble Servant,

CLEMENTINA.

LETTERS

P. R. E. A. C. E.

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LETTERS

Religious and Moral.

LETTER I.

Dear Aurelia,

ACCCEPT my thanks for your late favour. I rejoice to hear of your perseverance in those sentiments you had so zealously embraced, when you resided among us; and sincerely wish you increasing success in the sacred path of religion and virtue: fortitude to encounter every seeming difficulty; resignation to bear every repeated discouragement. This is the season of conflict, the hour of temptation; but amidst all, religion provides the firmest supports, administers the most reviving consolations, exhibits the most animating prospects.

I hope my dear friend has been enabled to discern the supreme excellence, and inexpressible importance of religion; and that this conviction will produce an increasing conformity to her precepts, and a steady attachment to her interest. Rich and various are the recompenses she bestows: substantial and perpetual, they form the felicity of a present life, and are only the faint anticipations of eternal joys. How animating the reflection! that there is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for the persevering believer; but language cannot fully express the nature of that inheritance, imagination (in its most towering flight) cannot paint the extent and duration of it. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither can the human mind (in its present limited state) conceive the glory that shall hereafter be revealed. Amidst such bright discoveries (for which we are unspeakably indebted to divine revelation) how amazing that we should hesitate in the prosecution and ascertainment of this happiness, or grow faint, in the short and uncertain race! A prize so glorious, one would think, should engage our unremitted ardour to secure it; but in this region of shadows, where clouds so frequently intervene, it is difficult to keep the eye of faith constantly awake, and to preserve
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the mind in that elevated situation, adapted to a prospect, so transcendent in beauty, so compleat in felicity.

My best wishes are engaged for my dear Aurelia's continual advancement in the life of faith, holiness, and happiness. Present your ardent petitions that your unworthy correspondent, may be a happy participant of the same blessings. When you are disposed to write, your letters will always be acceptable to,

Your obliged and affectionate Friend, &c.

LETTER II.

Dear Friend,

MY dear Matilda has frequently engaged my thoughts since we parted; and the generous sensibility you discovered on the occasion, claimed an earlier attention: but so distant a removal employed many little assiduities.

Thanks to kind Providence, we were conducted here in safety and health, though we encountered some difficulties in the first stages of the journey, chiefly arising from the peculiar inclemency

inclemency of the weather; but my dear friend's provisional cordial proved very acceptable at those seasons. We had the happiness of meeting Lucy in perfect health, who remembers, with a grateful affection, the family where she has been favoured with many agreeable seasons of recreation.

The late accounts from B——, and the adjacent country are very distressing. The calamities occasioned by the late flood, must affect many families. We are peculiarly solicitous to be assured that you and yours escaped uninjured. Your house being situated on a little eminence, I hope the waves were not permitted to invade your borders. To how many fatal contingencies are all terrestrial enjoyments exposed! Dr. Young justly observes,

“ Who builds on less than an immortal base,
Fond as he seems, condemns his joys to death.”

Soon after we arrived here, we had the alarming account of Mrs. D——'s sudden departure in a fit of apoplexy. What a striking admonition to be ready for the important hour! Then, whether the silver cord should gradually loosen, or instantaneously break, will not be a point of distressing solicitude. The only momentous concern is, to die happy and holy;
and

and yet how apt we are amidst the cares, or pleasures of life to disregard the most powerful convictions of its frailty and uncertainty.

That you and I may be ready to meet that grand event; that we may pass the interesting hour with composure and joy, relying on the Divine mercy, is the ardent wish of,

Your affectionate Friend, &c.

L E T T E R I I I .

My dear Friend,

YOU have lately been a little conversant with those disappointments which frequently chequer our prospects in life, and convinces us, that hope has no stability in this fluctuating state of things. We must transmit our views to a higher region for unprecarious, substantial happiness; and rejoice in present enjoyments, with that wise moderation which is suited to their fleeting nature. This is a difficult lesson to learn; but absolutely necessary to our repose.

Mr. L——'s late advancement has proved of short duration, and amused your expectations only

only with a visionary advantage: another person being substituted in the place which he thought he possessed. In order to soften your regret, and reconcile the mind to the disappointment, you should reflect that however pleasing the prospect may be, upon the acquisition of any supposed advantage, you cannot possibly determine how far the consequences might prove beneficial. Many things might arise to subvert your most pleasing expectations, and perhaps endanger that virtue and integrity which might be secure in a humbler station. On this supposition, we may congratulate our disappointments, as our most essential blessings. If we have enough to supply the necessities of this preliminary scene, let us be content and thankful: its superfluities are dangerous to possess, without superior abilities to improve them to the most excellent purposes.

I am, my dear Friend, yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

My dear Friend,

HOW unsearchable are the Divine counsels! It is our part to submit, with a devout resignation to the will of heaven: and as "in the midst

midst of life, we are in death," to make daily preparation for that important event.

The contents of your letter (arriving before I came to L——) were transmitted to me by Lucy. I had before been informed, by Mr. ——, of the melancholy circumstance which occasioned Mrs. ——'s death, which affected me with a deep concern. How fleeting are our temporal enjoyments! How suddenly do they take wing and forsake us! They are subject to vanish with every breeze! This reflection should weaken our dependance on present things, and moderate our attachments to them. Divine wisdom plans our advantage in our greatest afflictions; they are blessings in disguise, if we make a right improvement of them. As our ties to earth dissolve (and surely none are so great as our friends) our attractives to heaven increase, where we hope to meet them again in the perfection of felicity. We shall then no more dread a separation: the enjoyments of that state being as durable, as they are perfect. "For us they languish, and for us they die!" even to accelerate our preparation for the celestial mansions.

I should be glad to hear that your troublesome law-suit was determined to your satisfaction. It
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is a pity such perplexities should arise to disturb the evening of life. Endeavour, my dear friend, to live superior to them, and rather suffer miseries, than involve yourself in the labyrinths of law. When our just rights cannot be easily retrieved, I believe it is best to avoid extremities; but I submit this to your superior judgment, and can only say, I sincerely wish you in such a situation, that no earthly embarrassment might interfere with the peace and serenity of your mind. I use this freedom, because the happiness of my friends is an essential part of my own.

Accept our united wishes for your present and future felicity. We desire to be remembered by you in your religious retirements, and devoutly hope, the friendship that has subsisted a few years on earth, will be perpetuated and perfected in that happy world, to which we transmit our noblest expectations.

I am, yours, &c.

LETTER V.

Dear Charles,

YOUR acceptable favour arrived on ———, which informs me that you completed your voyage in eight weeks, the weather proving generally

generally serene, till your arrival at ———, so that your fears were not alarmed by those violent tempests which frequently agitate the surface of the mighty ocean, and present a scene of peculiar distress and solicitude. I bless God who has protected you from the danger of the sea, preserved your health in different climates, which exposed you to the opposite extremes of heat and cold, and landed you safely on the intended coast. ——— I hope a review of these distinguished mercies will sensibly affect your own mind, and excite the liveliest gratitude.

May you enjoy the continued favour of heaven, be secured from every danger, and restored in great comfort, at some happy period to your family and friends!

The concern you seem to express, on account of some mistakes in your past conduct, I hope is genuine; if so, there is a great probability they will be rectified. Every good resolution you form, relating to future life, is a step towards a reformation. Oh, rest not here! Engage not in your own strength; but implore superior aid. May your pious purposes be confirmed by divine grace! then they will undoubtedly appear in the regularity of your future conduct. Remember, Sir, the advantages you have enjoyed from education and example. Recal those scenes which

in moments of levity and folly are too much forgotten, and suffer them to resume their proper influence and authority. Fulfil the hopes of an indulgent parent, who has interested himself in your happiness with the tenderest assiduity. Oh, cast not a cloud upon his joy ! The evening shades are approaching ; contribute nothing to darken the lustre of his setting sun ; but rather strive to increase it. And whatever disagreements might arise in your family connections, from a difference of sentiments, let them be effaced ; suspect not any deficiency in the affection of those who are nearly allied to you ; but rather interpret their remonstrances as proofs of their friendship ; kindly intended to warn you of some danger, or to recover you from some snare.

But I would intreat you, Sir, not only to promote the happiness of others ; but to insure your own. Oh, mistake not the nature of this happiness ! Its origin is divine. Guard against every delusive appearance, which recommends itself under that engaging character, and too often seduces the inattentive mind. Search the Scriptures ; in them you will understand its nature, dignity, and excellence : diffusing its salutary influences, not only through a present life, but extending its beneficial effects through the boundless ages of eternity.

After

After the preceding address, I need not assure you, that

I am sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

Dear Juliet,

MY thoughts being vacant, and no particular occurrences presenting materials for a letter, if I choose my dear Juliet for a subject, I am sorry to say, it will be an indifferent one; rendered so, by your late frequent indispositions. I sincerely sympathize with you on this account, and in that particular complaint, Lowness of Spirits, which I am inclined to think a greater affliction than many other disorders, though often treated with less sympathy, and sometimes disregarded.

The state of our mind must constitute our felicity, or infelicity, in the most important respect, and all the satisfactions we enjoy, must rise in exact proportion to the frame of the spirits. If the intellectual harmony is disconcerted, its serene and lively operations suspended, and if they suffer but a transient eclipse, how exquisite the distress! The most amiable appearances of nature fade in the eye, and the

most refined enjoyments of social life, lose their engaging influence. How thankful ought we to be, when this is not the invariable situation of the mind! that though we are visited with some short intervals of darkness, the pleasing light will soon return.

I hope you will soon be permitted to experience this agreeable vicissitude, and welcome the dawns of your intellectual day; again rejoice in the freedom and activity of your spirits, having this acquisition superadded, an increasing, lively hope of your interest in the felicity of that day, which is unchangeable and eternal. How reviving the consideration, that there is a rest for the people of God! How should we continually fear, lest we should seem to come short of it. I admire St. Paul's expression: he is not inclined to admit the remotest appearance of uncertainty, in the attainment of this happiness; but intimates what unremitted circumspection is requisite to establish our hope on a firm foundation.

I have indulged myself in a few serious reflections, which I hope will not be unacceptable to you; esteeming it the best improvement of a friendly correspondence, to revive the remembrance of those sublime and delightful truths, which Christianity inculcates. If these were
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more frequently intermixed with our conversation, the propriety and utility of our daily intercourses, would be better evidenced, which too frequently evaporate into vanity, or perhaps are intensely exercised about the trivial concerns of this inferior life. And indeed we are so habituated to this method of speaking, that we naturally acquire a set of thoughts similar to it; hence arises the difficulty we perceive in contemplating divine subjects; we rally our dissipated ideas again and again; they are unaccustomed to that discipline, and it is with difficulty we fix the mind with that solidity and attention we would desire, to the delightful exercise of religious meditation. ¶

I am, dear Juliet,

Affectionately yours.

L E T T E R VII.

Dear Madam,

I Wrote to you a considerable time since, by a young Lady of your town, to which I hoped for the favour of an answer; but have been disappointed. However, I cheerfully embrace a repeated opportunity of paying my
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respects;

respects; and with them, beg leave to unite my congratulations on the late occasion, Mr. —'s marriage: an event which I hope will prove agreeable to all parties interested in it.

As that season approaches, when it is customary to express our benevolent wishes, give me leave to assure you of mine: and that they extend to your highest and best interests, which are essentially comprehended, and ascertained in that grand, that amazing event, which at this period, is annually recorded, and which we ought to commemorate with the most devout gratitude and joy; especially if we can infer our own happy interest in it. Then, Madam, we may with pleasure attend to the important revolutions of time, with great satisfaction admit the remembrance of advancing years, which, if improved with a persevering assiduity, will inevitably lead to a happiness immortal.—Elevated with a prospect so delightful, so glorious, we shall be enabled to contemplate with gratitude the years that are past, which have been distinguished by innumerable mercies, and with steady complacency welcome the future; view with an approving smile the the decline of life; referring without anxiety, every future event to the wise administration of Heaven.

I am, respectfully, your obedient, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

Dear Madam,

THE melancholy account transmitted by Philander, of the sudden death of your eldest son, affects my mind with deep regret, and excites the tenderest concern for your present distress. I wish I could suggest any considerations that might alleviate your sorrow; but alas! how difficult the task? I do not know that you can will bear the mention of the subject, though perpetually present to your imagination; and indeed the soft relentings of nature cannot be suppressed by all the arguments of reason and religion; but they may be mitigated, and by length of time, hushed into composure and resignation.

I hope by degrees, you will be enabled to gain this ascendance over the tender passions, and recover the serenity of your mind. You have yet, a son and a daughter left, who I hope will study to recompense the indulgent care of so good a Parent, and to soften all your griefs. But I forbear an enlargement at this time; only let me intreat you to accept my best thanks, for your generous and indulgent friendship to Philander, who I hope will retain a grateful sense
of

of his numerous obligations. Respects to Mr. and Miss _____. When a serene interval is afforded my dear friend, a letter will be highly acceptable to her

Obliged, &c.

LETTER IX.

Dear Charlotte,

I May reasonably imagine that a letter from me, will be quite unexpected, and must candidly acknowledge it is with some reluctance I engage in that office; as your distant behaviour, since a trivial dispute, has evidenced an uncommon degree of resentment, and the manner in which you left L_____, confirmed your entire disregard of our family.

Nevertheless, I cannot reconcile myself to the thought of parting with you, on these terms: to a mind susceptible of the least friendship and tenderness, the reflection is uncomfortable.

It is not my design now to revive the unpleasant subject: it is too trifling to deserve a repetition; much less, an implacable resentment. Indeed the latter, nothing can justify; and, under the influence of this conviction, I would avoid the appearance of it; being persuaded
that

that however immaterial the occasion of disagreement among friends may be, yet if persisted in, it has a pernicious influence on the temper; is a deliberate violation of a gospel precept; and not only darkens, but excludes the hope of its inestimable blessings. In this light, my dear Charlotte, nothing is inconsiderable; but viewed in such a connection, every thing is serious, awful and important. Dr. Young, in his beautiful delineation of a virtuous character, has these remarkable lines,

Each act, each thought, he questions, What its weight?
Its colour what? a thousand ages hence——
And what it then appears, he deems it now.

Let us then lament the depravity of our minds; mutually sympathize with each other; mutually embrace a reconciliation. It is a great uncertainty if we ever see each other in this present life: nay more, it is a great improbability. But I dare say, we are partakers of the same divine hope; we rejoice in the same promises; we look for the same heaven. Shall we meet there, with ceremony and reserve? with indifference and disgust? Impossible! All the happy inhabitants of the celestial regions are perfected in love. Let us then, my dear Charlotte, endeavour to cultivate and improve that benevolence of temper; that meekness, humility, patience, and all the other evangelical
graces

graces, which are preparatory to the enjoyment of the heavenly state. Let us not entertain, or approve any thing contrary to these; but earnestly wish to adjust every circumstance that relates to time, in the most satisfactory manner we are capable of, that eternity may dawn upon us with a reviving lustre, and present a serene and inviting prospect.

I have now divested my mind of an unpleasant impression; and hope these superficial hints may have a tendency to efface whatever might discompose yours. In whatever manner this letter may be received, I am satisfied in having acted agreeably to my sentiments. If you choose to reply, you may be assured it will not be unacceptable. I have still the same interest in your happiness I ever had, and am, with undiminished esteem and affection,

Sincerely yours.

LETTER X.

Dear Clarissa,

THE late solemnities in which you have been engaged, too justly entitle you to a sympathetic attention. I hope you were favoured with a peculiar degree of fortitude on that unexpected emergency. I am very desirous of

of hearing from you, and when your spirits are equal to the task, would request a more circumstantial account of the late event.

To die, as it is the last, so it is the most important transaction on the stage of time; a solemnity with which we should be habitually conversant in the hours of health, and by those means, endeavour to reconcile its awful realities. As incitements to this wise circumspection, we have incessant admonitions; not only interspersed throughout the pages of inspiration, but also diffused through the volume of nature. Every setting sun is a silent monitor, though unregarded; every drooping flower of the garden, conveys the salutary instruction; and the seasons, in their various revolutions, enforce the beneficial truth. The autumnal decline is a lively emblem of the frailty and mortality of the human frame; but we studiously elude the bright conviction, and are not disposed to interpret the sacred significance of nature's volume, being too busy, or too happy, to deduce moralizing reflections from seemingly remote springs.

This extreme inattention is not more common, than amazing; but the wonder increases, when we reflect on those circumstances which inculcate mortality in a more expressive and striking

striking manner. And here divine wisdom has given us line upon line, and precept upon precept: which to disregard, evidences the highest stupidity and unaccountable perverseness. Death's extensive dominions are daily enlarged, and we are frequent spectators of his victory. Numbers fall on the right hand and on the left, victims to the irresistible, the universal conqueror. No age is exempted; the bloom of youth, proves no security against the levelled dart, but often furnishes a more distinguished trophy of the victor's power. No season of life is guarded against the mortal attack; but an awful uncertainty, with respect to the hour, the manner, the place, in which we must encounter this last adversary, perpetually surrounds us. To render us still more attentive, we have repeated memorials of our dissolution, arising from the prevailing infirmities and diseases of the body: every pain we feel is a harbinger of death's approach; an exertion of his sway; a commencement of his victory. Happy they who seriously improve these accumulated premonitors!

How thankfully ought we to be for divine revelation! which enlightens the gloomy vista, and diffuses a radiance through the dark chambers of the grave: life and immortality being brought to light, and indubitably ascertained to the

the sincere believer, by the gospel. With what rapturous gratitude should we receive the divine truths, and labour to secure our own interest in that inheritance which is incorruptible; in that kingdom whose foundations are immoveable. Let us, my dear Clarissa, endeavour to improve all the providential dispensations of this inferior state, to the purposes for which they were wisely appointed. If they accelerate our preparation for the celestial mansions, how unspeakably precious the effect! Let us seriously attend to the divine admonition, "Be ye also ready," and the argument with which it is enforced, "for ye know not the day, nor the hour, when the Son of Man cometh." Then that hour will never come unseasonably, or unexpectedly; but we shall welcome its approach with a serene triumph, as the hour of compleat deliverance, the commencement of eternal joy.

I am, affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER XI.

Dear Judiana,

THE last evening's interview with your family, was of too affecting a nature to be immediately forgotten, though the subject was not

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new,

new, being chiefly a repetition of some unpleasing truths. But from one circumstance, I received a particular impression. You will readily recollect what it was, as, I suppose it engaged the general attention of the company, and has afforded you many pleasing reflections since. Upon expressing, with some little emotion, your resentment of a friend's conduct, in a very nice and critical affair, unfolding your thoughts, and discharging your mind of the unfavourable sentiment, you might possibly employ some interval in reflecting upon what you had said, and perceive some remorse arising from the small error, which I am apt to believe the nice suspicion of a warm friendship occasioned. But how vastly did you compensate for it, with a polite advance? I remember you made a genteel, affectionate acknowledgment to your friend; in which instance you discovered a spirit truly great. That concession reflected a most engaging lustre upon you, and by displaying the true beauty of submission, you exceedingly exalted yourself.

This was the circumstance that commanded my admiration; from this, I would solicit you to appear as agreeable upon other occasions, and repeat that part in which you shone so much, as you have frequent calls to it in your present situation.

situation. I confess the cases widely differ; the one was a free act, the other will be attended with reluctance. But the greater ascendance you gain over yourself, the merit rises in proportion.

If you coolly deliberate, you are now called not to intreat, but to accept of a reconciliation, and from a person, from whom it is more immediately a duty to accept it, which I imagine will have a considerable weight with you. Besides, a great part of an affectionate parent's satisfaction will depend upon this particular; and I am persuaded you will wish to soften all her anxieties, as the nicer sense she has of her family's proportionably increases her own, and renders them much more insupportable.

I intreat you to alter the purpose you have formed of a cold indifference, and an utter disregard to a person against whom such a behaviour may be attended with disagreeable consequences. You say, you have acted the submissive part, and tried every soft persuasive without success; but did you ever repent of such a conduct, however unfavourable to your expectations? Has it not given you very serene and delightful reflections? afforded a peaceful entertainment to your contemplative hours, which the faithful Register within, may produce

duce to your renewed satisfaction? Do not suffer the present warmth of your resentment, under some recent aggravations, to mislead your steps; persevere in that conduct which your reason will approve hereafter, and beware of that, which inclination only solicits you to choose.

How acceptable this familiar address may be, I cannot determine. I would not have you imagine, I write with an air of instruction. I do not attempt to teach you any thing; but to remind you of what you know. I am under the influence of no view, but the interest of the distressed. I should disdain a thought subservient to my own, under such a disguise.

I perceive in myself some unaccountable reluctance to part with the paper; but if my dear Judiana favours me with a reply, expressive of her approbation of these friendly hints, I shall have an additional satisfaction, in having executed my purpose. With this hope, I communicate my sentiments, and desire you would transmit yours to me, in the same unreserved manner. It would give me concern, that any coolness should prevail over a friendship which has subsisted almost from infancy, or that any thing should prove an interruption to it.—I have sometimes imagined a coldness
and

and formality in you, which I did not like ; but we are suspicious of each other, and mistake shadows for realities. Friendship is of a delicate nature, and receives a wound from the slightest dart. Without farther enlargement,

I remain, Judiana,

Affectionately yours, &c.

L E T T E R XII.

Dear Sylvia,

I Have lately had a very unexpected interview with Miss —, which, though but momentary, yet the sight of my agreeable friend, after so long an absence, revived the remembrance of scenes, which yield a melancholy pleasure. I did not part with her with that complacency I ought ; not being able to reconcile myself to so transient a visit, from so particular a friend ; but being under an indispensable necessity to proceed directly on her journey, I was obliged to submit. I was agreeably informed that she left you in better health than usual ; and she seemed to awaken some hope of a visit from you, in your intended journey to L——. I

could not help remarking that the day had been distinguished by two unexpected incidents, the morning presenting me with a visit from a particular friend and companion of my dear —, whom I had not seen for some time. The meeting was very affecting, the Lady being scarce seated, till she was dissolved in tears; an engagement to some relations, interfered with her acceptance of my invitation. Your epistolary favour just arrived, was doubly welcome, after so long expectation, though I would not wish to derive any peculiar satisfaction from that source, as it is always preceded with uneasiness, and your letters have sufficient recommendations at all times. You claim my sympathy in your frequent indispositions, which render every engagement less pleasing, and life itself undesirable, if considered exclusive of a future state of recompense and enjoyment; but this materially alters the scene, and the mind, under divine influences, is prepared to receive every dispensation, and to sustain every trial that may better secure the way to a glorious immortality.

You will allow, dear Sylvia, that serious truths best suit my pen, who have so lately been conversant with the most solemn scene; and especially where the introduction is so natural. I sincerely wish that all our afflictions may be
subservient

subservient to our final interests, and though some intervals of less awful reflection may be admitted, and cheerful conversation still interperse the remainder of life; yet I desire to entertain suitable impressions of that striking event, and to preserve such a remembrance of it, as may correct every immoderate expectation from present things, and circumscribe every earthly joy. I would acknowledge it a peculiar instance of divine mercy, that I can reflect with composure; that my thoughts are not involved in distressing perplexities, and that I retain such a degree of health and spirits for the necessary duties of my station. Accept our united respects.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XIII.

Dear Eugenio,

WITH peculiar pleasure I received yours, dated from —, and am much obliged to you for all the entertaining particulars it contained. From this descriptive genius, I may
hope

hope to acquire a visionary prospect of those remote parts of the world you intend to visit; but esteem this an inconsiderable pleasure, compared with that which the intelligence of your welfare will always impart. I perceive you have not made that progress over the watery element, which you might have expected from propitious gales; but have been conversant with those fluctuations which resemble life. However, for your safety we are highly indebted to an indulgent Providence, though it may not be accompanied with every pleasing circumstance, amidst all the inconveniences you have encountered.

I am glad you retain your usual vivacity. May you long retain it, supported by an happy constitution, and having conscious innocence as its grand and just foundation! I can scarce form a wish more essential to your present and final felicity.

You are entering now, Sir, upon a new scene of action, in which I doubt not, you will acquit yourself with integrity and honour; from a firm conviction, that however circumstances and situations may vary, the obligations to virtue are sacred and immutable: that a steady regard to these,

these, will dignify adversity, and give to affluence its truest charm.

As a supposed friend to virtue then, and a candidate for her recompenses, give me leave to wish you as much prosperity as may agreeably elucidate the scenes of life, and not endanger its important interests, being awfully connected with a future; such a measure, I am persuaded, your sedate and unbiassed judgment will esteem most eligible.

The different tempers of those who form your little community, will much interfere with the general happiness, except every one is determined to contribute his part to promote it. I am ready to smile when you observe, there is only the cabin to hold ten persons of as many opposite dispositions; it certainly requires great circumspection for each to avoid giving, or taking offence, and doubt not but every one thinks he can plead some merit in that particular.

Your detainment at ———, was, I think, a circumstance in your favour; and by admission into so genteel a family would prove a pleasing recreation, after a voyage of six months. I am sure you would all joyfully emerge out of the gloomy confinement of a cabin, to behold nature in a more inviting appearance, than you
had

had been accustomed to, during that interval; and however divided in sentiments, in other respects, you would be unanimous in your wishes to have the scene diversified, in order to re-assume with greater harmony, after the novelties that would present themselves, had given a sort of elevation to your disconcerted spirits. After being exposed to storms and tempests, you were doubly qualified to enjoy serene pleasures, and after indifferent accommodations, to relish the elegance of life. Undoubtedly you stood with real satisfaction upon the terrace to view a variegated, extensive prospect, in exchange for one that presented only the firmament and ocean; and would pay a most obedient attention to the harmonious notes of an harpsichord, after your ears had been accustomed to the magnificent violence of tempests.

Your friends here transmit their affectionate regards, and unite with me in requesting your indulgent attention to us, at every convenient opportunity.

I am, dear Eugenio,

Yours sincerely, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

My dear Friend,

I Should more frequently embrace opportunities of addressing my much esteemed Lucretia, but am extremely sensible how unqualified I am for the office; being led into a train of thought at so recollected a season, that is quite inconsistent with gaiety. In conversation, indeed, the mind is in a more dissipated frame, and a cheerfulness is then admitted, without deliberately weighing its foundation; friendship diffuses its enlivening influence, imparts an agreeable lustre to life, and spreads a temporary veil over darker scenes. But when the mind retires within itself; when contemplation resumes her sedate office, the veil is drawn aside. Then the late scenes of separation through which I have passed, revisit the imagination, and appear in all their solemn realities.

May you and I, my dear Lucretia, be enabled to gather salutary instructions from the afflictive dispensations of this perishing scene, and form a just estimate of its pretensions to our affections and solicitude; how unworthy of that share in both we often assign it! The convictions we
some.

sometimes feel, are directly calculated to dethrone ambition from her airy summit, and to check her immoderate sallies; to disrobe pleasure of her gay attire; to detect her fallacious smiles, and to pour contempt on all the splendour of affluence. The departure of our beloved relatives and friends (the chief attractions of a present scene, while they continue in it) invites our thoughts to those heavenly regions, where we hope they are ascended, and breathes a consolatory expectation of a reunion with them in the realms of bliss, if so happy to choose, and persevere in the same virtuous path. Dr. Young judiciously observes,

Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud
To damp our foolish ardors, and abate
That glare of life, which often blinds the wise.

I admire that beautiful simile in the same author, where he represents them, as

————— Pioneers to smooth
Our rugged pass to death; to break those bars
Of terror and abhorrence, nature throws
Cross our obstructed way; and thus to make
Welcome, as safe, our port from every storm.

Again,

Again,

Smitten friends

Are angels sent on errands full of love ;
 For us they languish, and for us they die ;
 And shall they languish, shall they die in vain ?
 Ungrateful, shall we grieve their hov'ring shades,
 Which wait the revolution in our hearts ?
 Shall we disdain their silent, soft address,
 Their posthumous advice, and pious prayer ?
 Senseless as herds that graze their hallow'd graves,
 Tread underfoot their agonies and groans ;
 Frustrate their anguish, and destroy their deaths ?

You will readily excuse the length of this beautiful picturesque extract from so eminent an author ; it is the chief recommendation of the paper, transmitted with her cordial esteem by

Your affectionate Friend, &c.

LETTER XV.

Dear Philander,

YOURS dated from ———, I have received,
 wherein you mention two former letters
 being sent since your arrival at ———, only
 D one

one of which came to hand, and I think I wrote to you soon after I received it; but the sea is a precarious conveyance! It is natural to imagine, more frequent assurances of your welfare would be extremely acceptable to your friends, from whom you are now removed at so considerable a distance; and likewise more particular accounts when you are disposed to write. We frequently hear of you from others, with whom you correspond in a commercial way, and lately received the agreeable intelligence of your success in trade, and design of visiting L—— in the spring, which, if divine Providence permits, hope you will extend your journey to ——.

As some pathetic expressions, Sir, are interspersed through your letter, which seem to flow from a mind impressed with a tender concern on account of past errors, I would by no means treat them with indifference, or pass them over in silence; they discover a sense of honour, friendship, gratitude, &c. generous and tender sentiments! Noble principles! Some of the peculiar characteristics of virtue; the distinguished ornaments of humanity. I would earnestly hope they proceed from a sincere heart. Oh, live what you profess! Let there be no apparent inconsistency between sentiment and practice; testify by every part of your future conversation

conversation and conduct, the reality and influence of those principles you approve; allow them an undivided empire in your mind, and suffer them to adorn and recommend your whole behaviour. Without this outward testimony, Sir, the sincerity of our pretensions cannot be fairly admitted; by it, they are reasonably inferred.

My concern for your welfare includes abundantly more than relates to a present life; it extends to a future. Indeed the true happiness of both, are inseparably connected; every thing we call by that name, independent of futurity, is a dream: nay worse, vanity and vexation of spirit. Nothing less, than an evangelical hope of our interest in the favour of God, through the all-sufficient merits of a divine Redeemer, and as the evidence of that, a renovation of heart and life, through the influences of the divine Spirit, can be the just foundation of solid joy. This is the inheritance we should all earnestly endeavour to obtain. This is the grand requisite to render life a comfortable scene; death desirable, and immortality welcome.

Presenting you the united affectionate respects of our little family, and intreating the frequent assurances of your welfare, I am,

Dear Philander, sincerely yours, &c.

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LETTER

LETTER XVI.

Dear Miss,

IT is with the utmost concern that I assume the disagreeable office of a Reprover; but as a conviction of duty, and a sincere desire to serve your best interests, are the motives by which I am influenced, I hope the reproof will be received in the same spirit of meekness and humility in which it is conveyed.

I choose this method of address, as an interview on the occasion might be peculiarly unpleasing.

The impropriety in your conduct then, dear Miss, which introduced an uncomfortable series of reflections, was manifested in singing and dancing on the Sabbath-day, in a family where I happened to be at the same time, and sitting in a room adjacent: a conduct expressive of an open contempt of the sacred day; a total disregard of those limits which decency itself would prescribe, and when the power of religion is admitted, an inconsiderate renunciation of that reverence of spirit and behaviour which it enjoins.

Perhaps

Perhaps it may be pleaded, that you were led into this error, through a design of entertaining a little child, who was one of the company; but this plea will not suffice in the present case, or form an adequate apology for that behaviour. Certainly your obliging intentions might have been expressed in a variety of instances better suited to the day.

Permit me to ask you, dear Miss, for what ends the Sabbath was instituted? What were the grand truths it was intended to inculcate? What the noble purposes it was intended to subserve? The original institution of the Sabbath, you will acknowledge, derives its authority from the supreme Legislator, and I need only refer you to the fourth commandment, for an explication of its design; and when you attentively examine the sacred records, you will be fully convinced, that the honour of that holy day was guarded by the strictest prohibitions, and most awful menaces.

The Jewish Sabbath being on the seventh day of the week, under the Christian dispensation that holy day was solemnised on the first, in commemoration of the most glorious, and most important event, viz. the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: who after he

had finished the great work of human redemption, by his meritorious obedience and death, confirmed it by this incontestible evidence, which formed the basis of the apostolical ministry; and which being transmitted to posterity by the united testimony of the evangelical writings is the unmoveable rock on which our most holy faith is established, and a sure foundation of the sublimest hope, triumph, and joy to all sincere believers. The benefits, the privileges, the blessings included in the christian faith are inconceivably important, of the most sublime nature, of the most extensive efficacy: they diffuse their comfortable influence on a present life, and will be consummated in unutterable perfection in the world of glory. Undoubtedly then, they present a boundless theme for meditation, demand the devoutest gratitude to the great Author of our salvation, and will for ever transcend the most exalted praise.

I hope, dear Miss, these general considerations will convince you, that a levity of temper and behaviour, expressed in singing and dancing, is utterly inconsistent with the demands of the Christian Sabbath. Let me intreat you to discontinue such visits, as lead you into these pernicious errors: to avoid such conversation as indisposes you for sedate reflection, and the sublime

lime exercises of devotion. And let it be your endeavour to improve the future opportunities that may offer, to devote the sacred hours (after attendance on the public instructions of religion) to serious conversation, reading, meditation and prayer; which under the divine blessing will lead you to a happiness rational, exalted, and divine. Such a happiness as will endear the noble privileges, and anticipate the consummate satisfactions included in a blessed immortality.

Your friendly monitor is deeply sensible of her innumerable defects, and would humbly acknowledge how destitute she is, of that spirit, the necessity, propriety, and excellence of which she so warmly asserts; but at the same time, is earnestly desirous of that happy attainment, esteems it an invaluable acquisition, constituting the most substantial felicity of an intelligent mind, and sincerely hopes, her future happy experience will afford improving convictions of its reality and excellence.

After the preceding address, it is unnecessary to assure you of my best wishes, - and as your most important interests are evidently consulted most, an apology is inconsistent with the nature of that design. Referring the success of this
humble

humble attempt, to the supreme Disposer, and you, to his heavenly direction and blessing,

I am, dear Miss,

Affectionately yours.

LETTER XVII.

Dear Henry,

WITH the most agreeable surprise I received your favour, being quite unexpected, which would have given a peculiar elevation to my spirits, had not the account of your Mamma's illness interfered. I hope you, and all around her, will endeavour, by the most obliging attentions, to alleviate every indisposition with which she may be visited. Indeed your attendance at school will prevent you at present from doing much in this respect; but I doubt not, upon every opportunity that offers, you will be solicitous to approve yourself in the offices of filial tenderness and affection, as to recompense, in some degree, her anxious concern for your interest and happiness.

It gives me pleasure that your situation at the Academy is so agreeable, and your progress in literature

literature equivalent to expectation. As you advance in the field of science, I hope every new acquisition in knowledge, will be accompanied with adequate improvements in virtue, and strengthen your attachment to her interest, that you will be enabled to discern her excellence, and cultivate a sincere reverence for her precepts.

Give me leave to recommend to you a little pamphlet entitled, *The Temple of Virtue*, which I delivered to Mr. —, when we parted; the magnificence of it will strike your admiration, and I assure you, it is erected on the firm basis of truth. It is virtue, my dear Henry, that gives a real lustre to life, and is the brightest ornament you can wear. It will sparkle when every inferior distinction shall vanish. It will survive time, and bloom with undecaying and improving beauty, when transplanted into the fair climate of immortality.

This inheritance, give me leave to wish you most sincerely, which includes both your present and final happiness, and to recommend you to the protection, guidance, and influence of the Supreme Being, who is perfect in wisdom, and unbounded in goodness. Your future correspondence will be extremely acceptable. Our
respects

respects wait on Mr. and Mrs. ——. The assurance of your Mamma's recovery will materially contribute to our general felicity.

I am, dear Henry,

Affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

Dear Amelia,

I Fully intended writing to you before this period; but have been prevented by many indispensable engagements; and even now, when an opportunity offers, I am at a loss what to say: choosing to wave the melancholy subject, you might expect I would enlarge upon. I have twice engaged in it, and would decline a third; however you cannot doubt my sympathizing with you, as a sufferer in the same vast loss, with myself. I wish we may be directed to improve every temporary event; adoring the wisdom of the all-disposing Power, as much under the adverse, as pleasing seasons of life, the same divine Power appointing both. Unmixed happiness is inconsistent with the nature and design of a probationary scene. We are to expect

expect infelicities of one kind or other. By them, the mind is disciplined for a future state of perfect enjoyment; and that person is happiest, whose frame of spirit is suited to bear them well. If all things flowed in a perpetual easy current, we should have no occasion for the exercise of some of the most distinguished christian graces, and be ready to take up our rest in these sublunary satisfactions. But the frequent intermixture of sickness, pain, adversity, disappointment (bitter ingredients indeed, but salutary) convince us of our mistake, correct our fond attachments, and point them to higher regions.

Let us therefore adore the wise administration of divine Providence, and endeavour to attain a humble, submissive temper, under every dispensation.

The post is on the wing! I have scarce time to assure you that, I am,

Yours affectionately, &c.

LETTER XIX.

Dear Matilda,

I Received by last evening's post, your favour of the 20th instant, inclosing a Lottery Ticket, in consequence of your generous intention,

tion, of which you informed me a few days before. Accept my thanks for this repeated instance of your friendship, and for your kind wishes with regard to the success; however that may be decided, my obligation is the same.

You judge right in believing that covetousness is not my predominant inclination. I think I would not desire to be rich; but it is difficult to know ourselves, and to form an exact estimate on that mysterious subject. Partiality often blends its favourable colouring in such a case. We think, abilities for the exercise of benevolence, where so many affecting opportunities are afforded, in this intermixed state of things, and which affluence is best calculated to indulge, highly desirable; but perhaps, if the power was conveyed, the disposition would be altered: then we should have cause to regret the exchange. If our situation in life is easy and comfortable, it demands our perpetual gratitude. To desire elegancies and superfluities, would imply an unreasonable temper, and an insensibility of those innumerable blessings which indulgent heaven has bestowed and distributed in a wise proportion; in the moderate enjoyment, and thankful improvement of which, our chief solicitude ought to be employed, whilst our supreme hope is transmitted beyond the narrow limits of time,

to

to that fair inheritance above the skies. There, indeed, my dear Matilda, are pleasures incorruptible and eternal; such as it is our wisdom to covet, our happiness to anticipate. In comparison with these, earthly possessions lose their attractive influence, appear with faded charms, and drop into darkness and oblivion!

I am glad to be informed of the good effects of your late journey, and wish you a long continuance of that state of health you at present enjoy, or rather an improvement of it, and conclude, sincerely and gratefully,

Yours affectionately, &c.

LETTER XX.

Dear Friend,

IS Saul also among the prophets? or rather, is Lucretia among the converts? Distinguished æra! I congratulate my dear Lucretia, that her attachments to serious piety, which her late conduct has evidenced, makes way for the introduction of more solid pretensions to esteem, approbation, and acceptance.

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The

The decorations of dress, which employed the elaborate study of the toilet, the allurements of the theatre, and the engagements of the card-table; drop their masque, and appear in their ridiculous realities: incapable of affording adequate entertainment to an immortal spirit, whose connection with these trifles of a day, will soon be dissolved; and its state in an awful eternity, materially decided by a judicious, and serious improvement of the present fleeting hour.

The same grace that enlightened, and convinced my dear Lucretia, is able to preserve her steady in the flowery paths of wisdom, if she is not negligent of its dictates, does not resist its bright convictions, and salutary influences. Present peace is the sure attendant on that sacred path, and nothing less than—eternal life, the prize.

That we may both attain the prize (which will inconceivably over-balance the intermediate conflict) through the riches of victorious grace, and the merits of redeeming love, employs the most ardent aspirations of my dear Lucretia's

Affectionate Friend.

LETTER

LETTER XXI

Dear Judiana,

I Received yours by last evening's post, which proved a messenger of solemn tidings indeed! the departure of Mrs. ———, who I hope is a considerable gainer by the exchange! But nature demands a tear; yet hope forbids an immoderate effusion of them.

To sustain the infelicities incident to mortality, (and especially that peculiar one, the temporary separation of friends by death) is indeed a very considerable attainment. It is by slow and elaborate steps we climb this arduous ascent. Vain and inefficacious are the efforts of human reason to administer support, or to compose the inquietude of the mind, without the superior aids of religion. It is faith and hope that perform these wonderful operations: faith that realizes invisible futurities; hope that breathes her consolations respecting their compleat felicity.

We ought to reflect on all those alleviating circumstances, that have attended afflictive dispensations, with gratitude. When divine Pro-

vidence removes our dear friends in a gradual manner, the mind is habituated to that expectation, and better prepared to sustain the severe trial. I hope you experience the advantage of these kind and gentle pre-monitions. You saw the advancing conqueror on his way, attentively observed his depredations on the blooming cheek, and the diminished lustre of the sprightly eye.

An humble dependance on the supporting grace of God, is our duty, interest, and happiness: this is our security, our defence, every moment. This I hope will be your perpetual security, and remarkably vouchsafed under the various emergencies of life. Then the grand consolations, with which the inspired volume abounds, many of which are peculiarly adapted to an afflicted state, and shine with transcendent brilliancy in the eye of faith; will diffuse that calm and peaceful serenity which the present situation so tenderly claims. That it may be the happy attainment of my dear Judiana, is the earnest desire of her

Affectionate Friend, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXII.

Dear Caroline,

I Acknowledge with thanks your late favour, and had the vanity to hope its early arrival. I am sorry you were prevented, in that obliging design, by your usual indispositions. The winter passed with very little satisfaction, and indeed the spring has hitherto made but an unpleasing advance through the interruption of some unexpected incidents. However, I hope you will be able to recompose your thoughts, retrieve a happy freedom of spirits, and yet enjoy much future pleasure at your favourite retreat: that you will endeavour to disengage the mind from too intense an application to commercial life, and submit to an intermission so necessary to your repose.

We rejoice that Sophia continues so well, on whose preservation and health, your happiness so much depends. I consider her now, as the reasonable companion of your leisure hours, and the enlivener of them all, with her innocent vivacity. We rejoice too in Mr. L——'s dawning recovery; hope it will soon be perfected, and health, that grand requisite to the true

enjoyment of life, restored on a permanent foundation. We are entertained with the prospect of seeing him, under that desirable state, and would not have him chequer it with a doubt. The supposition that something may intervene to prevent our purposes, when there is no apparent reason for it, is apt to disconcert our views, destroy the pleasure of hope, and enervates resolution. I would not have Mr. L—— give me an opportunity to rank him among unbelievers.

You charge me, dear Caroline, with a neglect in writing, for which I can plead no sufficient excuse; but give me leave to assure you, that the ties of esteem and gratitude will never be dissolved, however remiss I may be in acknowledging those engagements to you; and after this sincere declaration, I shall with less reluctance submit myself to your censure, as indolent, negligent, or what you please.

Harriet unites with me in best respects to you and Mr. L——. Love to Sophia. I intreat a letter by first opportunity, though not entitled to that favour.

I am, dear Caroline,

Affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

Dear Madam,

YOUR favour received, affords great pleasure; that paragraph only excepted, where you mention your indifferent state of health: but the period of life to which you have arrived, it is natural to expect, will be subject to many infirmities. I sincerely wish they may be alleviated by a lively faith, and a joyful hope. These will diffuse an enlivening lustre on the evening of life, and distinguish your setting sun with the most amiable splendour.

It would give me great pleasure to visit you, if a convenient opportunity permitted; but the length of the journey is considerable, and my engagements at present pretty numerous. However, if we do not meet in a present world, I hope we shall be fellow-citizens above, and form a part of the heavenly household.

The late melancholy changes in the family at S——, you have undoubtedly been informed of. It is indeed awful to consider how many of our dear and valuable friends have been summoned into eternity, during the last seven years. A
short

short space; but replete with important events! My dear — had been visited with a painful illness which threatened her removal a considerable time before the fatal hour arrived; accordingly she adjusted her affairs with a particular reference to that event, and as in life, she ever discovered the tenderest and most generous affection to all those related to Mr. —, who were so happy at different periods as to form a part of her family, and share the refinements of her conversation; so in the solemn article of death, those generous attentions were not discontinued, but seemed to prevail to the expiring moment.

I am glad the few articles lately sent, proved acceptable to you, which you intimate by an acknowledgment far exceeding their deserts. I had a letter lately from Mrs. D—; but though a miracle of conciseness, it conveyed the intelligence of their general welfare.

I am, dear Madam,

Respectfully yours, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXIV.

Dear Parthenia,

I Rejoice at seeing my dear friend's sentiments transmitted in their native dress, and not by the deputation of another. I am sensible at this season it was a task to you ; but your desire to oblige surmounted every difficulty. Your minute observation of mine, I esteem a great indulgence, and thank you for so particular a reply. I am pleased to view you in a more disengaged light than formerly, though some important concerns are yet depending. May you be equal to every part you are appointed to act ; and experience those divine supports, which a friend under such interesting impressions, joined to a very delicate frame requires !

I have had a little ramble in the country, where nature's ample diversified scenes, at this blooming season of the year, are surveyed with delight, and ought always to inspire gratitude to the Supreme Original of all that's fair, lovely, beneficial and excellent ; who has formed such a paradise of beauty, for the inhabitants of the earth, and replenished it with various productions, expressive of his boundless liberality.

These

These all wait on Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and they are filled with good. All thy works praise Thee, O Lord ! and let all thy saints bless Thee !

The retirement of a rural life is peculiarly favourable to meditation ; every thing we behold, seems to provoke it, and even to point the thought upwards. Innocence, and peace (its inseparable attendant) seem to reside in the humble cottages. There is nothing to excite ambitious competitions in those unornamented abodes. Domestic life seems there to breathe the serenest satisfactions, the purest, the most refined delights. The Tiller's wholesome toil is generally rewarded with competent advantages, which during their state of immaturity, exercise his hope with pleasing expectations, and convince him, how much depends on that divine Providence which appoints the former and the latter rain in their seasons, to impart fertility to the soil, and efficacy to industry. Health too seems to shed her partial roses among them, with a lavish hand, which the purity of the air, the plainness and temperance of diet, and the various incentives to exercise, unite in bestowing.

You

You will think I am so captivated with shady groves, and purling streams, that I shall soon turn shepherdes; and, accoutered with my straw bonnet and crook, attended with a faithful dog, adopt some fleecy charge. However that be, and wherever I am, Parthenia will not be wholly excluded from my contemplations, and good wishes, in which Amelia and Daphne, her two smiling little cherubims, will share. I find they are competitors for your esteem, which I dare say is impartially distributed. It is highly pleasing to observe that laudable emulation in children, harmonizing with reciprocal affection. Indeed when a spirit of emulation degenerates into envy; it forms an unhappy character. But Parthenia's assiduity will watch the growth and tendency of every rising principle; being peculiarly qualified for that important office, which Mr. Thomson's elegant pen, so finely represents.

Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea, how to shoot,
To pour instruction on the opening mind,
To breathe the enlivening spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast.

The paper having received this essential decoration, secures its pretensions to Parthenia's acceptance, on the footing of merit, and entirely silences every addition from her

Affectionate Friend, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXV.

Dear Sylvia,

HAS my dear friend experienced, not only the instability of worldly circumstances, but the inconstancy of human friendship? From those who under a fair sky, beamed benignity, does she meet with that frigid indifference of aspect, which corresponds with the stern winter of adversity? It is indeed a trying situation; but inculcates lessons of patience, humility, and resignation. Lovely graces! absolutely necessary to our repose, however difficult to attain: of sovereign efficacy to relax our intense attachments to this fleeting scene, to engage them in a sublimer prospect, and invigorate our pursuit after unprecarious enjoyments. Be not discouraged on this occasion. That friendship which varies with the seasons, does not deserve the name, and may be relinquished without regret; it is scarce worth a sigh.

But I hope my dear Sylvia need not complain of a general defection in this point. Some undoubtedly remain (to the honour of humanity) who are still equally ready to patronize merit, to devise liberal things, in favour of a distressed friend,

friend, and to project plans of tender alleviation. But my dear Sylvia proceeds in her pathetic representations, and the tear of sensibility seems to drop upon the paper. Are then the exertions of a virtuous industry (which would willingly prevent a train of obligations) seemingly defeated? and are you brought into those delicate situations, which awaken the finest feelings of the mind, excite your clemency, and pierce you with solicitude, respecting others, who are nearly allied to you in the bonds of nature! In this complicated distress, does every help, and every hope seem to fail? You move my compassion: but I must intreat you to endeavour to rise superior to all the insinuations of infidelity, so ready to assault our fortitude under such interesting emergencies; and to commit all your anxieties to the Supreme Disposer of human events, who will appoint what is best for us, in this probationary scene.

The clouds you so much dread, may be providentially dissipated in a short season, and produce a shower of unexpected blessings. In the mean time, may all those graces which adorn adversity, be the portion of my dear Sylvia! They do not grow indeed on nature's uncultivated soil; but are of heavenly extraction. These will diffuse that tranquility and peace,

F

which

which the world, under its most frowning aspect and variegated appearances, cannot deprive you of, and teach you to live greatly independant on its precarious smiles.

I am, my dear Friend, with sympathetic regard,

Affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER XXVI.

My dear Friend,

I Am glad the few hints I dropped, communicated any satisfaction to my dear Sylvia in her present perplexity; and that some propitious star seems to penetrate through the gloom, with a cheering ray. I congratulate you on this alleviation, and transmit the wishes of benevolence for your advancing felicity.

We must not expect to pass through this region of vicissitude without encountering some of its tempests. It is well that the hurricanes of life are not perpetual; but are sometimes succeeded by a calm. We require a great concurrence

rence of blessings to render our passage comfortable through the wilderness. We are apt to over-look these in our moments of dejection, and to examine, with a critical exactness, every source of anxiety. If we take a comparative view of our infelicities, we shall always have cause for thankfulness, that they are no greater, and adore the Supreme Disposer, who appoints every part of our inheritance, with infinite wisdom. How desirable the experience included in these beautiful lines!

When in the sultry glebe we faint,
Or on the thirsty mountain pant,
To fertile vales, and dewy meads,
Our weary, wandering steps he leads;
Where peaceful rivers, soft and slow,
Amid the verdant landscape flow.

Though in a bare and rugged way
Through devious, lonely wilds we stray;
His presence shall our pains beguile,
The barren wilderness shall smile,
With sudden greens, and herbage crown'd,
And streams shall murmur all around.

How picturesque the description! My dear friend seems to regret that her actions are misinterpreted, by a censorious, undiscerning world. It is no uncommon case on such a theatre of promiscuous examination, and diver-

fified opinion. The delicate, tender feelings of humanity cannot be comprehended by those who are destitute of them; or the generous efforts of benevolence approved by the heart that is wrapped in the little circle of self. The one will be construed weakness; the other indiscretion.

Does my dear Sylvia enjoy the smiles of an approving conscience? and the humble hope of a far superior approbation? From that elevated sphere, can she say to death, Where is thy sting? and to the grave, Where is thy victory? Does she hope to expire (whether in the elegant apartment, or the humble cottage) with that divine serenity which Mr. Pope's celebrated lines so charmingly delineate?

Vital spark! of heavenly flame,
Quit! oh quit this mortal frame;
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying,
Oh! the pain, the bliss of dying.
Cease fond nature! cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

Hark! they whisper, angels say,
Sister spirit, come away.
What is this absorbs me quite?
Steals my senses, shuts my sight;
Sinks my spirits, draws my breath;
Tell me, my soul! can this be death?

The

The world recedes, it disappears,
 Heav'n opens on my eyes, my ears
 With sounds seraphic ring.
 Lend, lend your wings! I mount, I fly,
 Oh grave! where is thy victory?
 Oh death! where is thy sting?

That is enough, my dear Sylvia; regard not the intermediate conflicts of this preliminary scene, whether arising from the world's ingratitude, and censoriousness; or undeserved contempt: it is the common lot of a depressed situation, and ought not to pierce the heart too deeply that is fortified with the armour of a victorious faith, and the divine hope of a blessed immortality. Adieu, my dear friend. May you be conducted safe through the remaining labyrinth of this desert, to the regions of perfect amity and bliss!

Yours affectionately, &c.

L E T T E R XXVII.

Dear Amelia,

MY numerous engagements having interfered with an immediate acknowledgment of my dear friend's obliging letter, in which her

native vivacity sparkles, and innocently entertains; but I want to see it tempered with the mild effulgence of wisdom's rays, which adds to entertainment, edification. But this is the result of sedate reflection which you are too busy, or (in your own imagination) too happy to admit.

I would not have you think I would extinguish, with a rigid severity, all your innocent vivacities. It is not necessary in order to be wise, that you should be dull; on the contrary, true wisdom inspires a cheerfulness on the most solid basis, as it gives the highest relish to present enjoyment, and ensures eternal felicities. But the transient, uncertain nature of our situation here, my dear Amelia, and the soul's immortality hereafter, convey ideas of inexpressible importance, and magnificence. They pour that contempt on the trifles of a day, which they merit, and enable us to view the grand references of a momentary existence here—to an eternal scene. In this just disquisition of things we must admit sedate thoughts. My favourite Author, Dr. Young, remarks,

A soul without reflection, like a pile
Without inhabitant, to ruin runs.

Suffer

Suffer me to enrich my letter with a few more lines from that star of the first magnitude in the literary firmament.

Tell me, some God! my guardian angel! tell,
 What thus infatuates? What enchantment plants
 The phantom of an age 'twixt us and death,
 Already at the door? He knocks! we hear him,
 And yet we will not hear. What nail defends
 Our untouch'd hearts? What miracle turns off
 The pointed thought? which from a thousand quivers
 Is daily darted, and is daily shunn'd?
 We stand as in a battle, throngs on throngs
 Around us falling; wounded oft ourselves;
 Though bleeding with our wounds, immortal still!
 We see time's furrows on another's brow,
 And death intrench'd, preparing his assault;
 How few themselves, in that just mirror see!
 Or, seeing, draw their inference as strong!
 Their death is certain; doubtful here; he must,
 And soon; we may, within an age, expire.
 Tho' grey our heads, our thoughts and aims are green,
 Like damag'd clocks, whose hand and bell dissent,
 Folly sings six, while nature points at twelve!

Aburd longevity! more, more it cries;
 More life, more wealth, more trash of every kind;
 And wherefore mad for more, when relish fails?
 Ask thought for joy, grow rich, and hoard within.
 Think you the soul, when this life's rattles cease,
 Has nothing of more manly to succeed?
 Contrast the taste immortal; learn ev'n now
 To relish what alone subsists hereafter,
 Divine, or none, henceforth your joys for ever.

Say

Say not, my dear Amelia, these reflections are only suited to the evening of life; they suit every stage of it; every stage being uncertain. Remark his beautiful comment on Narcissa's youth, which yielded to the universal conqueror, whose evening approached, before she attained the meridian.

Early, bright, transient, chaste, as morning dew,
She sparkled, was exhal'd and went to heaven.

I am, my dear Amelia's

Sincere and affectionate Friend.

LETTER XXVIII.

Dear Lavinia,

HAVING nothing material to communicate, I have delayed acknowledging your last favour for so long a time, and indeed the same reason might still prevail, but being desirous of renewed assurances of your welfare, I resume the correspondence.

I was lately favoured with a letter from Mrs. W——, who has been indisposed. She is far advanced

advanced in the vale of years, and old age has its peculiar train of infirmities. Barzillai's description of it, is very affecting. Indeed he spoke experimentally; but to you, who are in the bloom of life, a dissertation on that subject would be quite ineligible; yet remember, Lavinia, it advances by imperceptible degrees, and your improvements ought to keep pace with its approach, lest, if you should ever arrive at that stage, you should be chargeable with what Dr. Young calls, "Grand climacterical absurdities."

I think Dr. Young's Night Thoughts in general, the most sublime, and animated human compositions I ever read: the reasoning is close, pointed, and perspicuous; the expression beautifully concise, comprehending a volume of instruction in a few words. Indeed the subjects on which he treats are of the sublimest, tenderest, and most interesting nature; fitted to display, to the highest advantage, the grandeur of the intellectual powers. What mind can resist the force of his pointed appeals to Lorenzo? which dart conviction, bright and sudden as the lightning? May you and I feel, as well as admire, the force of his arguments! and "to believe, Lavinia, is to feel." Accept our united respects.

I am, sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

Dear Madam,

ACCEPT my thanks for your obliging favour by Lucretia. Since her return to —, a variety of engagements have prevented the more immediate acknowledgment; but I need scarce assure you, that Mrs. — has frequently been the agreeable subject of our conversation since that period; having left many pleasing impressions of a generous friendship, to afford a grateful recollection.

I suppose my lively Lucretia has wrote you a long and entertaining epistle. I want a little of her vivacity to render mine so; but I am happy in the thought that the one will supply the defects of the other, and under the advantage of such an introduction obtain a welcome reception.

You inform me of your settlement in your new habitation; I wish you and Mr. — a long enjoyment of it. Lucretia has given me a particular description of its elegance; and the situation being extremely pleasant, you obligingly urge it as a motive to a visit; but those whom
you

you are pleased to admit into the number of your friends, require no inducements but what arise from your personal merit.

Your charming bowers, I suppose, afford a refreshing shade; your grottos, a cool retreat; your gardens, a profusion of fragrance; your rivulets, a soothing murmur; your cascades, a magnificent torrent; and the situation of your villa commands an extensive, diversified prospect: thus, though nature and art combine to entertain the senses, yet let me give my amiable friend a caution against reposing amidst these dangerous insinuations, and taking up her rest in these terrestrial amusements. I believe some may account it a felicity to be stationed in the inferior ranks of life; for even in these we have too many attachments to a present world. But certainly in a more elevated sphere, our attachments would be still stronger, and our temptations more numerous. To be surrounded with every thing that art and nature can furnish, to entertain the eye and regale the senses, is certainly a dangerous situation, and requires superior degrees of virtue to enjoy it with innocence and to improve it to the best purposes.

That you, my dear friend, may rejoice in this fair sublunary inheritance, as though you rejoiced

joiced not, may use it with a wise moderation, without abusing it, knowing that the fashion of this world passeth away, as a vision of the night, is the sincere wish of

Your obliged Friend, &c.

LETTER XXX.

Dear Philander,

I Received your favour last post, in which you have been obligingly particular, and am glad to perceive your delay in writing was not occasioned by indisposition, to which I was ready to impute it. It was indeed natural to suppose that a hurry of engagements would immediately succeed the late event; but as you had signified your intention of writing so soon, there seemed to be greater cause of uneasiness.

I come now to that solemn paragraph in your letter, relating to dear Judiana's will. She has indeed highly distinguished you; not only in a manner expressive of her liberality, by leaving you so genteel a competency; but also by testifying that generous confidence she reposed in you,

you, in appointing you the guardian of her orphan children, Frederick and Altamont. Important charge! When you view that office in its full extent, and include in the idea, the various obligations you are under to the faithful discharge of it, can you avoid this pathetic address to heaven, Who is sufficient for these things? The obligations resulting from duty, friendship, affection, and gratitude, when considered singly, will assume a sacred authority over the mind: what then must their united influence be?

I doubt not, but you are deeply conscious of this, and earnestly desirous of superior aid, (without which we are incapable of performing any one duty) in order to approve yourself worthy of that high honour conferred upon you, that sacred trust committed to you, by our late valuable friend.

Her latest hours were undoubtedly distinguished by an anxious concern for her dear children. Amidst all her generous cares, and benevolent intentions, relating to others, this most certainly had the pre-eminence; and formed a powerful attractive to this inferior scene; and perhaps, sometimes, even checked her imaginary excursions to the heavenly state, and in a measure interrupted a previous inter-

course with the world of spirits. All this might be very consistent with the liveliest exertions of faith in God; from the consideration of whose infinite perfections, the christian derives the firmest support and consolation. For we cannot expect, that every uneasy sensation (though seeming to retire) will be totally eradicated, till our connection with this lower world is dissolved; till we drop the veil of flesh; till this mortal is arrayed in immortality.

Our dear friend had many previous admonitions of her approaching dissolution. She had long conversed with death and its visionary terrors, and I hope was fully prepared for the solemn encounter. The general adjustment of her affairs so long before the important period arrived, and the particular manner in which she conducted those that had an immediate reference to her departure, indicated a happy serenity of mind. May you and I, Philander, endeavour to improve this bereaving dispensation to the best advantage!

For us they languish, and for us they die;

And shall they languish, shall they die in vain?

Forbid it, gracious heaven!

Permit

Permit me to make one remark more, before I close my letter; viz. that however serious truths may be disregarded in our moments of gay indifference, and visionary mirth, we shall esteem them highly when the mind assumes its native dignity, and enjoys a sedate and contemplative frame, (the only proper situation of a rational and immortal spirit;) and when affliction points their evidence, we shall then begin more clearly to discern their beauty, and decide in favour of their superlative excellence and importance. Adieu.

Sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

Dear Madam,

THE particular instances of your generous friendship, with which I was lately favoured, require the earliest and most grateful acknowledgments. I am now sitting in a pensive attitude, reflecting on the pleasure I lately enjoyed in your company, and the distinguished civilities I received from your agreeable family. In this profound reverie the favourite Delia, with her

significant looks, and actions, strikes my imagination, and detains me in pleasing captivity, furnishes me with a pretty variety of visionary entertainments; all so perfectly innocent and artless, that I almost excuse your partiality for the little trifler.

I am now in a very proper frame for expatiating on the vanity of earthly enjoyments; but shall not impose on you such a disagreeable subject. Let me rather divert the thought, and solace myself with the pleasing hope, that our past pleasures may be renewed, though at what period is at present uncertain. With peculiar satisfaction I can suppose Mrs. D——, or any other of my favourite friends, enlivening the social hour, with innocent gaiety. But I am not satisfied, though often entertained with speculative pleasures. I would have you realize them by a trip here, the first vacant opportunity.

If you can, from the generous motives of friendship, forget, for a little time, the elegance of your own house, and the delicacy and variety of your own table, and condescend to the plain accommodations and entertainment you would meet with at —, it would afford me great pleasure to be favoured with a visit from you. And I do not know, that this humiliating transposition

position would be any real prejudice to you; but rather introduce a salutary variety. It is not necessary, Madam, that you should daily feast on Nectar and Ambrosia, these enervating delicacies; but rather that you should submit to, and exchange them for the common food of mortals. On the plan of a virtuous self-denial then, I invite you here; and instead of being attended by a train of livery-servants, your good-nature will allow you to be as well pleased with the artless, and well-meant civilities of my plain domestics.

You will expect now some particulars of my journey, which (thanks to the indulgent care of heaven) was conducted without any disagreeable accident. The company, upon the whole, were agreeable; nature was in her best array; the skies formed a magnificent azure canopy; the trees and fields clothed with verdure, and smiling with abundance, presented a lovely scene to the eye, and pointed its grateful direction to the Supreme Original of beauty and excellence. The road between S—— and E——, is the most delightful that I remember to have travelled; deriving peculiar beauty from the serpentine streams of the river F——. We arrived at E—— in the evening. The impetuous showers prevented our accurate survey of the city for

two days. The prospect from the castle is extremely beautiful and extensive. I think almost equal to that from ———, the almost circular meanders of the river excepted, which is the distinguishing peculiarity of the latter.

To close an agreeable journey with the most emphatic delight, I found my friends here in perfect health. They unite with me in grateful respects to Mrs. D——, and in affectionate salutations to the innocent Delia, on whose perfections I have expatiated a little. The fugitive post permits me only to say, Adieu.

LETTER XXXII.

Dear Harriet,

I Am favoured with both your letters, and have an important apology to plead for my delay in expressing my obligations, viz. the indisposition of Clerimont, who was visited with a threatening disorder soon after my introduction to a new house. Upon his happy recovery, I embrace the earliest opportunity of communicating my satisfactions to my much esteemed friend. I congratulate you on your safe arrival at L——, the

the road and season being so indifferent; and conclude, your visit was very agreeable to yourself, as well as acceptable to your friends, as you resided there so considerable a time. But your last letter informs me of a melancholy event, which would render your return home extremely uncomfortable, and occasion great distress in the family.

The darkest dispensations of Providence are intended to promote our interest and happiness; if rightly improved, will certainly have that effect, though, if we judge by sense, it is difficult to be persuaded of that truth. The loss of friends, is a most lively memento of our own dissolution, and an emphatical admonition to prepare for the interesting event. In the bloom of youth, we may perhaps deem it an unpleasing, an unnecessary speculation; but even then, it cannot be unseasonable, as no interval of time is secure from these summonses. It is therefore our highest interest, my dear Harriet, to converse with future scenes. Such views will have a salutary effect on our conversation and conduct; regulate our tempers, desires, and hopes, and open a serene and inviting prospect into immortality.

Permit me to congratulate you on the affluence of your present circumstances, which enables
you

you to devise liberal things, invests you with the happy privilege of softening the distresses of humanity, by imparting bread to the hungry, raiment to the destitute, cordials to the sick, education to the ignorant, &c. desirable, I had almost said, enviable situation! I congratulate you, as I hope a benevolent inclination accompanies it; if not, you are rather entitled to compassion: as our real usefulness, should always bear a proportion to our abilities. Ah! my Harriet, what immense sums are profusely hazarded at a gaming-table? the success of which might have been realized by benevolent attentions, amply recompensed in the most refined satisfactions, and secured in a treasury that will return an interest larger than our limited ideas can at present conceive. Indeed if there was no future recompense of grace peculiarly allotted to benevolence and beneficence, the pleasure resulting from these amiable principles in this life, would recommend them to every judicious and attentive mind. Yet, how much more blessed it is to give, than to receive, none can comprehend, but those whose minds are formed for such elegant sensibilities.

The plan of our beneficence too, would be much enlarged, if we seriously considered, that nature's real wants, are circumscribed in narrow bounds:

bounds: a little, comparatively, will suffice them; but pride and luxury have insatiable appetites. The decorations of dress, and the epicurean taste require a large expence, and alienate many considerable moieties which ought to descend to the indigent, and refresh their uncomfortable situations. How few banquets are provided to regale the palates of the poor? but how many studiously devoted to the entertainment of those, who fare deliciously every day! I hope my dear Harriet, will adopt the liberal plan, and shine in the most distinguished beneficence. I cannot form a wish more essential to your happiness.

I am, sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER XXXIII.

Dear Miss,

THE late solemnity in which you and I were engaged, had a direct tendency to excite the most important conviction, the most interesting reflections; being appointed to attend the interment of an agreeable friend, who finished her race, before she had arrived at the term of years

years which we ourselves have seen ; and whose removal out of this life, at so early a period, was probably an unexpected event to herself as well as others : though she had many previous intimations of mortality by repeated and less considerable indispositions, which I hope she improved to her spiritual advantage.

The scene was deeply solemn ; and when viewed in connection with that exquisite distress, by which an affectionate parent was agitated, when summoned by the adorable providence of God, to resign a beloved child, in the bloom of youth, to the dust of death, it was affecting beyond description.

It was natural to suppose she was endeared to him by innumerable offices of filial obedience and affection : the amiable companion of his declining age, who seemed by the natural liveliness and affability of her temper, to be very capable of contributing to a parent's satisfaction and comfort. And was it not, dear Miss, a very obvious reflection, when we surrounded her sepulchre, in a little time the same offices that we are now performing for our dear friend, will be performed for us, and we too shall be subjects of death's dominions, in a little time. There our sleeping dust will be deposited, never to awake
till

till these visible heavens are no more; till the sound of the last trumpet; till the radiant morning of the resurrection!

And are we ready? are we willing to die? Has death lost its terrors and can we view it without any inquietude of mind? Nay more; can we contemplate the universal Conqueror with serenity and composure of spirit? as a vanquished enemy, as a kind deliverer from the fatigues, anxieties, dangers, temptations and sorrows of this militant state? Can we congratulate his arrival, and receive him as a welcome messenger of peace; invested with a commission to release the imprisoned soul from a tenement of clay; to open the gates of immortality, and point its flight to a city that hath foundations, to an inheritance incorruptible, to a kingdom immoveable? Can we in faith utter those triumphant words of an eminent sufferer? (who lived under a much darker dispensation than we now enjoy; even before the expected Messiah appeared in the flesh.) I know that my Redeemer liveth! Or can we adopt the animated, beautiful language of an inspired Apostle, O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! And can we reply to that interesting interrogation as he did? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but
thanks

thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. May this be our happy attainment, through the infinite merits of our divine Redeemer!

I am induced to revive these solemnities, dear Miss, and to recommend these interesting enquiries, from what you lately mentioned when you favoured me with a visit, which has given me some surprise and concern; nor can I act agreeable to the character of your friend, if I suffer it to escape my observation. You said, you had been at the play, which was the succeeding evening. And was it possible you could immediately reconcile such apparent inconsistencies? A funeral, and a play! Light and darkness is scarce more incompatible. Alas! what insensibility was evidenced by such a conduct? In vain are we visited by alarming dispensations, (several of which I could enumerate in a rapid succession; but leave them to your own recollection) if we endeavour to resist those piercing convictions they are calculated to excite, and suppress the correspondent reflections that would naturally arise in the mind on these solemn occasions, by resorting to the pernicious entertainments of the theatre, and mixing in the modish circles of dissipation and folly. Let me intreat you, dear Miss, to resign these trivial amusements;

amusements; expect no true joy, no comfortable reflection, from those precious hours, devoted to vanity, the result sooner or later will be vexation of spirit. The present world is a transitory, perishing scene; nor is it intended for our rest. Be satisfied then with nothing less than the divine hope of a better life; endeavour to ascertain that glorious hope every day, more and more, by a suitable temper and conduct, regulated by a lively persevering faith in the infinite merits of our divine Redeemer.

I am, sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER XXXIV.

Dear Juliet,

I Perceive, friendship has its sorrows as well as its joys: and though at present I am in a very unharmonious frame for writing a letter, having so lately parted with some of my select friends; yet I cannot prevail on myself any longer to delay sending you the intelligence of my safe arrival here. If I wait for a more lively interval, perhaps it may be at too remote a season, as I cannot immediately forget the pleasures I enjoyed

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in

in the company of my friends, or immediately lose a tender regret that they are past. However, amidst the many unpleasing interruptions of our social joys, and the incidents that frequently occur, to damp the refined satisfactions of sincere and disinterested friendship; it is a reviving thought, that there is a world subject to no vicissitude, no imperfection; but compleat in bliss, where friendship, immortal friendship will be perpetuated, and glow with celestial ardour. To that serene clime, to those fair, delightful mansions, I transmit my views, under the present impressions.

The company associated with me on the journey, studied to render themselves agreeable by every obliging attention. We were unanimous in our curiosity of viewing those seats of the nobility, contiguous to the road we travelled; therefore we paid a visit to the Duke of —'s rural retreat, which indeed is a very magnificent structure. The family being absent, favoured a minute inspection of the spacious apartments, ornamented with curious tapestry and paintings. The gardens are planned in the finest taste, and exhibit the most lovely prospect imaginable; but the descending showers, prevented our extensive rambles through the flowery lawns, the shady groves, and all the variegated scenery of nature,
and

and precipitated our return to the vehicle of conveyance.

The next day's journey brought us to ———. In the evening we went to view the Duke of ———'s seat, where we were again entertained with magnificent appearances. The paintings were numerous, and exquisitely beautiful. I regretted the want of time to examine attentively, the curiosities of that fine collection; being particularly pleased with finished performances, which seem to me, the successful efforts of genius in the art, though I pretend to no critical judgment in it. But it was inconvenient to prolong our stay in those delightful apartments: we therefore quitted them with some reluctance, repaired to the inn, and then proceeded on our journey to ———. This beautiful city exceeded the expectations I had formed of it, from description; but as you have resided there some years past, I need not enlarge on this subject. We had proceeded but a little way on the last stage of this day's journey, till the evening shades advanced; but to soften that inconvenience the regent of night shone with unclouded effulgence, and presented us with the most enchanting views of the river ———, that glides along that part of the country, and exceedingly beautifies the prospect. Cynthia
H 2 beaming

beaming her gentle lustre upon the crystal stream, had the finest effect upon the eye imaginable.

Thus, my dear Juliet, I have given you a little sketch of my late excursion, which was happily perfected without the intervention of any alarming accident. How highly indebted are we to that divine Providence, which guards us in all our ways!

You will be desirous of knowing the success of my Lottery Ticket, for which I was obliged to Matilda's generosity. After a variety of pretty conjectures, natural I suppose, on such occasions, I received an account of its being drawn a blank—absolutely a blank, about a fortnight after the drawing of the Lottery commenced: so that I was not detained long in suspense, had not much time afforded to build castles in the air, which I suppose is the frequent employment of the adventurers for these fortuitous acquisitions. Indeed, from a rational plan I had formed in my mind, for the disposal of a considerable sum, I was strongly inclined to believe it would be realized, and rather regretted the tantalizing disappointment. Ah! my dear Juliet! what a fantastic chase of shadows are we often engaged in! I shall tire you with no more
impertinence

impertinence at present; but reserve the rest to another opportunity. I am, with grateful respects to you and yours,

Your obliged and affectionate Friend, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

Dear Madam,

I Disembarked on Friday last, and was quite well the whole time. The Captain provided genteelly for us; much better than I expected, and behaved in a very obliging manner to his timorous, inexperienced adventurers. The weather was delightfully serene; and every thing conspired to render the voyage agreeable. As a material completion of all these satisfactions, the dear expectants of my arrival were in perfect health, and congratulated my return, after so long an absence, with the tenderest affection.

What a magnificent scene does the sea present! The numerous fleet of ships, which accompanied our progress through the vast world of waters at this tranquil season, destined to dis-

ferent ports, combined in the service of commerce, charged with no hostile commission from any quarter of the globe; greatly enlivened and adorned the prospect. Some closely associated, others lessening to the view, according to their respective distances: all seeming to glide with perfect serenity and imperceptible expedition through the great deep, whilst the boundless firmament formed an azure canopy over our heads, splendidly illustrious with the solar rays, which in the evening were exchanged for the mild effulgence of the queen of night, majestically attended with all her starry train, beaming their united, gentle influence on the undulating waves. A scene so transcendent in beauty and grandeur recalled to my remembrance those fine lines in Milton's morning Hymn.

These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good!
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wond'rous fair: Thyself, how wond'rous then!
Unspeaking.—

I am now waiting the pleasing assurance of your improved state of health, Lucinda's safe return, the little anecdotes you can collect from my favourite Lavinia, and that diversity of elegant sentiment, you are so well qualified to bestow for the improvement of your humble correspondent; and am, with due respect and gratitude,

Your obliged, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXXVI.

Dear Henry,

THIS day I was favoured with yours, which brings me an account of your excellent mother's gradual recovery, in which I sincerely participate your joy, and hope it will soon be perfected, by an entire restoration of health. I am entertained, and agreeably surpris'd with your rapid advancement in classical learning, and the facility with which you proceed in every other department of your education. Yet, after all, my dear, remember that your scientific attainments, and whatever else we call polite accomplishments, are extremely superficial, unaccompanied with religion. This is our true dignity, and from this, the refinements of education derive their real lustre. Art may form the mere outside Gentleman; but only grace, the Christian: this is your grand concern, your important interest, your consummate happiness: as on this, not only temporal, but eternal felicity awfully depends. May you then, my dear Henry, be richly supplied with all spiritual blessings! furnished with that knowledge that is essential to salvation, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. May you be taught the sublime
precepts

precepts of Christianity, by the unerring Spirit, that divine and efficacious instructor. By him may you be enlightened, comforted, and established in the path of rectitude. Then you will indeed esteem Wisdom's ways eligible and delightful, and comprehend the extensive meaning of those engaging epithets by which they are delineated, viz. pleasure and peace: not visionary, not delusive; but solid and substantial.

You will readily excuse me from enlarging on this subject; it is perhaps too sublime and serious to engage your speculation at this early age. Yours is but the dawn of life; yet, my dear Henry, you can scarce imbibe these principles too soon. They ought to tincture every opening idea, and breathe their aromatic perfume on the expanding blossom. But if they do not administer any present advantage, yet I enjoy a peculiar pleasure in addressing you in this manner. If the paper, through the partiality of friendship, through an affection to novelty in my young correspondent, or in any other accidental way, should happen to be preserved and meet with the revival of your maturer judgment, perhaps, at a time when I may be entirely disengaged from every temporary concern, and dismissed from present scenes; then, at that remoter period, if any thing I now write, should
be

be subservient in the least degree, to your happiness, the thought is reviving, and affords the most refined satisfaction. My best respects wait on Mrs. L——. Intercede, my dear Henry, in your own persuasive terms, for the expeditious arrival of a long letter from her, which will oblige

Yours affectionately, &c.

LETTER XXXVII.

Dear Constantia,

THIS post brings me two of your letters; the one (intercepted in the arrival) presents an account of dear Mrs. F——'s extreme weakness, to which a protracted scene of complicated sufferings had reduced the mortal fabric; the other is charged with the solemn message of her death! which, though gradual, expected, and seemingly prolonged, is a solemn message still. But I hope in our meditations on this awful event, connected with all those circumstances preceding and attending it, we may have cause on her account to rejoice, and humbly venture to consider her now, as a happy spirit, invested with

with glory and immortality; escaped from a painful prison, in which she had long sighed, being burthened, and for ever disengaged from the cares, affections, and temptations of a vain and sinful world. How delightful! How reviving the idea! How inconceivably happy the exchange! In this view then let us contemplate our dear translated friend, which will throw a lustre on all those melancholy ideas, which shade the remembrance of her sufferings, and the gloomy train that will arise from a sensibility of our own loss, in so valuable a friend.

But here, an affecting scene opens, and a more important sufferer claims my attention. If we have lost a friend, what has her dear child lost! A parent, in whom she enjoyed the most desirable advantages and blessings; judicious to correct, instruct, advise, persuade! I am most tenderly concerned on Seliam's account, and cannot unfold half of those ideas that engage my mind on this detached consideration.

I hope the superintendency of her future education will be committed to a person of judgment and piety; and that the affectionate, sympathizing friend, will be happily blended with the other excellencies of her character. Present my affectionate salutations to the tender orphan:
bring

bring her with you, the first visit you can favour me with. Lucy will particularly rejoice in so agreeable an associate.

I am, dear Constantia,

Affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Dear Caroline,

MY late expedition was not attended with the success I hoped for; but I am apt sometimes to form my hopes, agreeable to my wishes, and not to the nature of things. In this scene of diversified expectation, we are subject to innumerable disappointments: however, there is an innate satisfaction in pursuing the path we think right, and we ought to be reconciled to the event, under such a procedure. Accept my thanks, dear Caroline, for your kind attention to the business, I took the liberty to recommend, and for the exertion of your influence in favour of the distressed Ophelia. An agreeable revolution has smiled upon her circumstances, by a numerous and benevolent subscription to her

her little manuscript, which is not ambitious of literary fame, but desirous of securing the approbation of her patronizing friends. Dejected merit, seems to raise its drooping head by these means, and I hope the remainder of life will pass with tranquility.

You and I, my dear Caroline, have been little acquainted with these humiliating vicissitudes; but while we continue here, we are equally exposed to them. May we always maintain that affectionate concern for others, which we would wish to experience ourselves in an unhappy reversion. Alas! how little does the world in general act upon this principle? Those who profess themselves friends in the sunshine of prosperity, often withdraw their pretensions under the rigorous climate of adversity, and scarce seem to know you, under such unfavourable declensions. But I drop this unpleasing subject; and presenting you the united respects and good wishes of our little circle, remain

-Affectionately yours.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIX.

Dear Friend,

THE combination of anxieties that oppress my dear Lavinia's pensive mind (so pathetically enumerated in her letter) will, I hope, in a little time be succeeded by fairer prospects, which will afford a pleasing refreshment to her fatigued and disconcerted spirits. Let not my dear friend indulge an apprehensive, diffident temper. Aspire after that patience, that fortitude, that mild resignation so necessary to encounter adversity. The humiliating reversion you have experienced, is only a temporary one. Your most essential, your immortal felicity in a far better life, may perhaps be advanced, nay secured, by it. That consideration, I should think, ought to silence every complaint. I am convinced, my dear Lavinia, that the refinements of your education, the delicacy of your temper, the tender and endearing alliances you have survived, all conspire to give you a nicer sensibility of your present inferior situation. You have conversed familiarly, with the various difficulties and solitudes that attend a limited dependance; have been obliged to make that nice, prudential calculation of expence in every frivolous

volous particular, which is quite foreign to my Lavinia, and not only your generous, but your just disposition, has often been perplexed by unexpected, and inevitable contingencies. Through the inattention of summer friends, whose affluence might materially assist and relieve, you seem to be a solitary individual, detached from your usual connections, left to struggle through an unfriendly region, not one hospitable roof ready to entertain, on the generous plan of disinterested friendship, the unsettled, the unprovided pilgrim; and a variety of assiduous efforts for a beneficial designation defeated.

I sincerely sympathize with you, my dear friend; but, be not discouraged: the cares of a present life are apt too deeply to depress our spirits, we should endeavour to guard against their disquieting influence. It is natural indeed to long for an exemption from them, and to desire that serene situation Mr. Pope has so elegantly described, which seems to exhibit a terrestrial paradise.

How happy is the holy hermit's lot!
 The world forgetting, by the world forgot;
 Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind,
 Each pray'r accepted, and each wish resign'd,
 Desires composed, affections ever even,
 Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heaven.

Oh,

Oh, grace divine ! Oh, virtue heavenly fair !
 Divine oblivion of low-thoughted care !
 Fresh blooming hope ! gay daughter of the sky !
 And faith, our early immortality !
 Enter each mild, each amicable guest ;
 Receive, and wrap me in eternal rest.

But wait with becoming patience the gracious result of divine dispensations; we are very incompetent judges of their nature and design; with too inquisitive a temper, apt to misinterpret both. Let us humbly commit ourselves, and every future event to the disposal of infinite Wisdom, and unbounded Goodness. There is our only sure anchor of hope, amidst the threatening waves of this tempestuous sea, on which we are embarked, till we arrive at the desirable haven of eternal rest. Remember, Lavinia, how the melodious singer of our Israel, Doctor Watts, has painted the magnificent scenes, that rise behind the curtain of mortality.

There is a land of pure delight,
 Where saints immortal reign;
 Infinite day excludes the night,
 And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,
 And never with'ring flowers ;
 Death, like a narrow sea divides,
 This heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields, beyond the swelling flood,
 Stand drest in living green :
 So to the Jews, old Canaan flood,
 While Jordan roll'd between.

Oh ! could we make these doubts remove,
 These gloomy doubts that rise ;
 And see the Canaan that we love,
 With unclouded eyes.

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
 And view the landscape o'er,
 Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
 Would fright us from the shore.

It is only there we can enjoy unmolested peace, and congratulate our perfect security from every future tempest. May this be our happy inheritance through the infinite merits of redeeming love ! Then the little fatigues of the wilderness, will be gloriously recompensed. Adieu. When any alleviation is indulged my dear Lavinia, no one will share in it more sincerely and affectionately, than her

Sympathizing Friend.

LETTER

LETTER XL.

Dear Friend,

MY dear Lavinia will excuse so immediate a repetition of my correspondence, when I am permitted by a benevolent Lady of my acquaintance (to whom I communicated her present embarrassments) to request her acceptance of the enclosed bank note, accompanied with sincere wishes for your improved tranquility: and if a journey here was convenient, the generosity of her temper would be indulged, by assigning you an apartment in her house, till some eligible appointment offered. I would not have my dear friend hesitate in the acceptance of this kind proposal: the Lady's native delicacy will confer these particular obligations on my Lavinia, with all that easy, encouraging affability, and with all that sympathetic tenderness too, that her present perplexed situation claims. Alas! what should we do in this climate of perpetual variation, if some generous spirits were not interspersed here and there, whose affluence empowered them to alleviate the temporary infelicities of mortality? It is a duty incumbent on those who are entrusted with enlarged abilities, and one of the most delightful duties a be-

nevolent heart can be engaged in. Here, in a most emphatic sense, virtue is its own reward. What pity that these stars of the first magnitude, should appear so seldom, and sparkle with so faint a lustre in our cloudy hemisphere !

Come then, my dear Lavinia, my timorous, my dispirited friend, on whom poverty threatens to impress her chilling hand, and impose her cumbersome weight of anxieties : embrace this providential asylum ; regard not the little punctilios of dress, if not altogether so elegant and fashionable as Lavinia has been accustomed to wear. These are mere outward things, and do not deserve the name of a recommendation ; nothing less than intrinsic merit, is entitled to that, which is greatly independant on exterior appearances, and considers them with that degree of indifference they deserve ; any farther than consists with neatness and decency.

The elegant appendages of your former situation, would not suit your present inferior expectations, nor would they fit with that becoming ease on my Lavinia, whose mind was detained in the most interesting suspense, relative to her future destination. I confess, the obligations derived from alliance (though remote) and a previous long established acquaintance, as they seem

seem more naturally to be expected, could therefore more easily be embraced ; but if these are not voluntarily offered, or even complied with ; would Lavinia decline those that are ? By no means ; I expect therefore, your thankful acquiescence in the invitation, and shall wait your arrival here, (when you inform me of the time) with all the assiduity of a sincere, though humble friend, ready to introduce you to one, whose generosity annexed to that name, is empowered by the elevation of circumstance to grant you a welcome reception.

I am,

Sympathetically yours, &c.

LETTER XLI.

Dear Madam,

A Considerable portion of fleeting time is elapsed, since I was favoured with a letter from you. I am unwilling to admit the mortifying supposition, that you have forgot me, or that you do not intend to repeat your indulgences ; but rather impute it, to the close engagements
you

you have had, on Philander's account, whose misfortune gave me a most sensible concern. But a late letter from Mr. G—— mentioned his being better, and I hope now, all your cares are recompensed in his perfect recovery. I wait to have the pleasing hope confirmed, and should be glad to be assured of the improved state of your own health, which used to be subject to frequent interruptions.

The agreeable Aurelia passed a few weeks with us, on her return home from her extensive travels, and insisted on my accompanying her to ———. Mr. ——— met us at York, where we stayed a few days. It being the race week, the city was enlivened with company; but as we shared in none of the public diversions, the time was chiefly employed in visits, and viewing the curiosities of the place; among which, the Cathedral bears the pre-eminence. The magnificence of the sacred edifice, the grandeur, elegance, and variety of the monumental ornaments, and the antiquities preserved for the inspection of the curious, affect the mind with a pleasing solemnity, and invite to sedate recollection.

Here, as you take your sequestered walk along the spacious aisles, contemplation is presented

sented with the subjects of the utmost importance. The venerable repositories of the once animated clay, waiting the illustrious morning of the resurrection, to awake to an immortal existence, furnish a theme of the most interesting meditation. With what expressive eloquence do the mouldering reliques circulate lessons of humility, peace, forbearance, charity, mildness, gentleness; and that universal benevolence, which ought to distinguish, and adorn humanity! Here, every rude gale of passion is hushed in universal silence, and every vain competition resigned! How emphatically is the improvement of the present uncertain hour enforced! and an unremitted ardour to secure a blessed eternity excited! In these awful recesses, the little terrestrial distinctions, that glitter with so much importance in the eye, in our moments of fantastic levity, and gay dissipation, seem totally annihilated! The bloom of beauty; the splendour of affluence; the pomp of titles, &c. vanish into air,

And like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind.

Permit me, dear Madam, to adorn my letter with a few lines selected from Dr. Young's Night Thoughts; most of them are so excellent in

in my estimation, that I scarce know which to prefer; but the following have a direct allusion to the present subject.

The man how blest, who sick of gaudy scenes,
(Scenes apt to thrust between us, and ourselves)
Is led by choice to take his fav'rite walk,
Beneath death's gloomy, silent, cypress shades,
Unpierc'd by vanity's fantastic ray;
To read his monuments, to weigh his dust,
Visit his vaults, and dwell among the tombs!
Lorenzo! read with me, Narcissa's stone;
(Narcissa was thy fav'rite) let me read
Her mortal stone; few Doctors preach so well,
Few Orators so tenderly can touch
The feeling heart. What pathos in the date!
Apt words can strike, and yet in them we see
Faint images of what we here enjoy.
What cause have we to build on length of life?
Temptations seize, when fear is laid asleep,
And ill foreboded, is our strongest guard.

See from her tomb, as from an humble shrine,
Truth, radiant goddess! sallies on my soul,
And puts delusion's dusky train to flight;
Dispels the mist our sultry passions raise,
From objects low, terrestrial and obscene,
And shews the real estimate of things,
Which no man unafflicted ever saw;
Pulls off the veil from virtue's rising charms!
Detects temptation in a thousand lies.
Truth bids me look on men as autumn leaves,
And all they bleed for, as the summer's dust
Driv'n by the whirlwind: lighted by her beams

I widen

I widen my horizon, gain new powers,
 See things invissible, feel things remote,
 Am present with futurities ; think nought
 To man so foreign, as the joys possess,
 Nought so much his, as those beyond the grave.

We pursued our journey to ———, with
 greater alacrity after this agreeable intermission,
 where I passed six weeks with my engaging
 friends, and am lately returned home. Our
 united respects attend you and yours.

I am, dear Madam,

Your obliged Friend, &c.

LETTER XLII.

Dear Friend,

IS it possible, my dear Charlotte should enter-
 tain a thought so injurious to friendship, or
 that she could have invented a worse apology for
 her long silence ? I hope it will be discarded for
 the future, and that you will adopt more con-
 sistent, more favourable sentiments of your
 humble correspondent. But I am sorry your
 indisposition had any share in the excuse. I
 hope

hope you have derived good from the late affliction, and rejoice in the alleviation of it. I congratulate you that your new situation in life is so well adapted to your choice, and rendered eligible by so many convenient blessings. You have been highly favoured of heaven, indulged with its peculiar smiles, and I hope will enjoy many years of distinguished felicity. The remoteness of your modest mansion (where elegance and simplicity are so happily blended) from the hurry of life, I know will be agreeable to your contemplative disposition; and the independancy of your circumstances will enable your benevolent mind to plan schemes for imparting felicity to others. To relieve the indigent, to administer the lenient balm of consolation to the distressed, &c. &c. will be offices well suited to your refined taste.

I have been lately at —, and improved the opportunity of visiting your agreeable relations, who share liberally in your late settlement; the peculiar advantages of which, in a small measure reconcile the distance of your removal. I declined visiting the well frequented apartment at D—, as its usual attractives had deserted it. I could speak as pathetically as you do, on this tender theme! I sometimes pass an hour in improving conversation at Mr. —'s. There
religious

religious subjects, (the most edifying and important) are introduced with the utmost propriety, and investigated with mutual candour and humility, to which your correspondent lends an attentive ear. Mrs. ——— has lately been on a visit to her relations at ———. Our pious friend, Mrs. ———, I hear, has finished her painful warfare, and I hope has attained to perfect felicity. I think she behaved with exemplary patience and resignation, under some of the severest trials of humanity. Her complicated afflictions reflected a lustre on the sufferer: a frame so enervated, and helpless as infancy, encountering all the inconveniences of indigence, deriving the chief of her small support from the casual bounty of a few friends, exhibited all the suffering graces in a conspicuous point of view. Religion! celestial visitant! how great are thy triumphs! how celebrated thy victories! only to be exceeded by thy immense rewards.

Ah! my dear Charlotte, you and I have never experienced a suffering state, united with extreme poverty. If that should ever prove our designation, may we be provided with the requisite supports of a triumphant faith, and joyful hope; and by frequently realizing that tender and interesting scene in our imagination, may we cultivate a spirit of benevolence to the whole hu-

K

man

man race, and according to our abilities, and the occasions presented, be ready to distribute, willing to communicate.

My best respects wait on the family in general; favour me with frequent letters, which will always contribute to the improvement of

Your affectionate Friend.

L E T T E R XLIII.

My dear Friend,

DE A R Judiana's letter saluted me this morning at breakfast, and added an intellectual, to the natural refreshment: conveying the acceptable information that I am soon to enjoy the pleasure of your company for a season. You proceed to give me some account of your amiable sister. And though her recovery is not so perceptible, or immediate as we could all wish, yet we ought to be thankful for the dawnings of it, and particularly so, for that resignation, nay more, that happy serenity of temper, she is enabled, invariably to testify, under the afflictive dispensation. The king of terrors, instead of a menacing

menacing aspect, seems to wear an angel's face, in her imagination, and to approach with the most acceptable commissions. How judiciously you reason on this tender subject! In the emaciated Belinda we have the accuracy of your reflections exemplified.

My dear ——— is in the country, surveying the bounty of Providence in a plentiful harvest. I am delighted with the pious Psalmist's description of such a scene, who paints it with inimitable life and beauty.

I thank my dear Judiana, for her benevolent wishes; they breathe the true spirit of piety, and are the amiable transcript of her excellent heart. Give me leave to return mine for my friend in the same pathetic language. In vain I search for a happier mode of expression. In this, as in every other respect, Judiana claims a decided superiority. Your dear sister is included in my affectionate respects. Waiting the enlargement of my happiness by your presence,

I am, sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XLIV.

Dear Madam,

LAST post I received a second letter from Charles, since I wrote to —, both which contain unsatisfactory accounts of you, as I perceive you have been subject to frequent complaints ever since his return; but the last letter presented me an occasion of joy in a very important particular, as dear Selina has recovered the small-pox, though attended with dangerous symptoms. The effects of your solicitude during that interval, I imagine are most perceptible now, as your care of her, in a situation so critical, would interfere with every thought concerning yourself: I am glad you were enabled to act in that painful capacity (rendered more so, by the apprehension of danger) under so many circumstances of personal indisposition, and that you were not obliged to transfer those tender offices, which the occasion required. I hope the fine air of — will compleat the recovery of both, and that you will reside there the whole summer, not permitting inferior concerns to deprive you of one of the greatest advantages to health.

Mrs.

Mrs. T——'s death would convey a striking memento to the gay world; but they are frequently too busy or too happy to attend long to such silent, solemn lectures. How faint the impression they make! How soon obliterated!

I remember she was once the subject of our conversation, when I was at —, and from thence conclude that she resigned life in the bloom of beauty, and splendour of affluence! but these are empty names at that important period! How emphatically does the universal Conqueror inscribe vanity on all human distinctions and enjoyments!

Eugenio pursues his studies with assiduity and delight. I expect to see him at the approaching recess, though I believe he is so much devoted to his literary improvements, that he could very well dispense without an intermission. But I cannot so easily resign the pleasure that prospect affords me. I shall esteem it a particular favour to hear from you when an acceptable opportunity offers; and to have every hope concerning you, and dear Selina more frequently confirmed: assuring you, whatever relates to the happiness of either, constitutes a material part of

Your obliged and affectionate Friend's.

LETTER XLV.

Dear Henry,

THE late incident presents to my mind a train of interesting reflections, some of which permit me to communicate, as I hope they may be conducive to your advantage. In this, I comply with the prevailing dictates of a benevolent friendship, to which religion unites her commanding influence: under the sanction of such pleas, the freedom of the present address requires no apology.

Your residence, Sir, in my family, at occasional periods, has submitted to my observation some events in which the mercy of God has been particularly evidenced towards you; your health having been renewed after frequent indispositions, and your preservation repeatedly ascertained in imminent dangers. These remarkable interposals of divine Providence ought to awaken your serious attention, as they demand your perpetual gratitude. Study then, what returns are due from a dependant creature to the Almighty Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor. Surely unprejudiced reason will acknowledge that the incessant acknowledgments of a grateful

grateful heart, accompanied with a life of sincere, uniform, persevering obedience, the only genuine declaration of your gratitude, are most justly due. Review, then, with deep concern, every unhappy deviation from the sacred path of duty; implore the divine forgiveness, for the sake of the blessed Jesus; believe in his precious merits to absolve you from the guilt of all your sins, and to procure grace to enlighten, convert, and sanctify you.

When this happy change is effected, Wisdom's ways will be your deliberate and voluntary choice: you will experience that they are ways of pleasantness, and that all her flowery paths are peace: the divine commands, in which your highest interest and felicity are consulted, will be easy and delightful, and the divine institutions amiable; for it is the humble appeal of every sincere convert, Lord! I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine Honour dwelleth; and every other devotional exercise will be performed with affectionate zeal.

I hope I may congratulate you, Sir, on the commencement of a reformation. With pleasure I have observed every favourable dawning of it, and entertain the expectation of brighter appearances.

appearances. Resolutely encounter every opposition, in an humble dependance on divine grace, and that grace will be sufficient for you, in every time of need. I have occasionally dropped an admonition, which did not seem unacceptable, and for this reason, hope the present will meet with a candid and gentle reception: if the motive of our conduct is good, it is the best recommendation. In this instance then, I have reason to be satisfied, and more so, if success attends it. I do not pretend to teach you any thing; but to remind you of what you know: and if you know these things, happy are you if you do them. I claim no superiority, but in years. This you will readily admit me. One who has passed the meridian, and entered on the evening of life, ought to reflect on its important interests, with maturer judgment and steadier attention: and as every period of time is uncertain, we should endeavour to influence others to the best improvement of it.

I am, dear Henry,

Sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XLVI.

Dear Madam,

I Received yours, which I esteem a favour, in a peculiar sense, being sensible with how much reluctance you engage in that office, and present you the thanks of our little circle for your kind concern for our welfare. I am sorry to hear you have had such indifferent health through the winter. The uncommon dampness of the season would undoubtedly affect a delicate constitution; but as you justly observe, they are happy, who are prepared for every event. The late dreadful hurricanes, attended with the most remarkable floods, have been frequent and extensive; exhibiting scenes of peculiar distress in many parts of the kingdom. The London papers have transmitted very melancholy accounts, among which that from ———, is dismal beyond expression. We have great reason to adore the mercy of God in our preservation amidst these menacing convulsions of nature, and ought seriously to remember the awful operations of his hand. Happy for us, if the late alarming visitations produce repentance and amendment.

I think there is a just foundation for your supposition of having but an inconsiderable resort

of company at the approaching season; as the national distress is great, and we seem involved in very important perplexities: but I fear the love of pleasure is still prevalent in its criminal excess, and that its deluded votaries (too many of them) will be apt to disregard the admonitions of conscience, though enforced by the most awful prospects, and still to refer them to a more convenient, more disengaged season! It is a melancholy reflection that these places of public resort, which are intended for the recovery of health, should be so eminently devoted to the purposes of dissipation, as such a state, one would imagine, would indispose for trifles, and strike the mind with a deeper sensibility of the importance of time.

I perceive the encouragement you meet with from your friends, will be a powerful inducement to engage in a very extensive trade. And here I apprehend your chief danger consists: not only as you are peculiarly unqualified for it, by a precarious state of health; but also from the very nature of a wholesale trade, the uncertainty of success I should think might effectually determine you against it: which uncertainty will preserve you in a state of anxiety, and interfere with any satisfaction you might otherwise enjoy. The motives to it are considerably lessened,

sened, as you seem to have a favourable prospect of an extensive retail trade, and upon a firm establishment. The latter may be conducted with much more ease, whereas both would require great additional expences, demand too entire an attention; consume your time and exhaust your spirits. In one word, it would subject you to many inconveniences, involve you in numberless perplexities.

Admit there may be a prospect, from a prosperous train of events, of acquiring a more considerable fortune, is that a sufficient inducement to sacrifice time, ease, and health! Unaccountable infatuation! Suffer not yourself, dear Madam, to be thus deluded. The world, I know, is a powerful intercessor; but a grand enemy to our best interests. The necessity or prosperity of things depends much on our circumstances in life; what may be eligible, what may be commendable in one person, is not so in another. As you are placed by an indulgent Providence, in a comfortable sphere, desire not to enlarge a sufficiency, by any immoderate acquisitions; but pursue such methods only of improving a fortune as are perfectly consistent with the freedom and serenity of your mind.

I have

I have expressed my sentiments on this subject with the utmost freedom, as I think it important. May we both be so happy to view those things that relate to our conduct in life, in the clear and impartial light of truth: free from those disguises in which they too frequently represent themselves, and impose on the inconsiderate mind; and under the powerful convictions of truth, may we ever be disposed to direct our pursuits, and regulate our actions conformably to her heavenly dictates. We have but a short time to act upon the stage of life; but the manner how, is inconceivably important! Our united respects attend you.

I am, dear Madam, sincerely yours,

CLEMENTINA.

F I N I S.